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# CITY/COUNTY INSPECTIONS

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## MISSION

The mission of the City-County Inspections department is to provide a cost-effective level of service designed to assure the adequate protection of the health and safety of the citizens of the City and County of Durham through assertive enforcement of the various State Building, Electrical, Plumbing and Mechanical Codes and local Zoning Ordinances.

## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Durham City-County Inspections Department is a merged City and County Department that administers and enforces the North Carolina State Building Codes and the Durham City-County Zoning Ordinances. State law mandates the inspection of all building construction for the purpose of enforcing the various construction codes, thereby assuring the adequate protection of the general public's health and safety. In addition, the City and County regulate development through the merged City-County Zoning Ordinance.

The Department also provides day care facilities inspections, semi-annual inspections of all public schools, inspections for Durham Housing Authority projects, follow-up inspections in response to citizens' concerns, Board of Adjustment case reviews, Development Review Board case reviews, rezoning case reviews, etc.

The department reviews plans and issues all building permits and Certificates of Compliance; maintains an active permit filing system; inspects construction, electrical, mechanical, and plumbing systems to ensure compliance with codes; and responds to numerous inquiries concerning regulations. The City-County Inspections department is open from 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and is located at 101 City Hall Plaza, Durham, North Carolina.

## 2002-03 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Performed 2 quality assurance inspections behind each inspector each month.
- Inspected all public schools twice during the year.
- Performed requested inspections within 24 hours 90% of the time.
- Reviewed 85% of all residential plans within 4 working days.
- Assisted with development of "one-stop shopping" software for development-related departments.

- Enhanced Departmental website.
- Provided "Eyes and Ears" in the field to report incidences of crime (or suspicious activities).
- Studied possibilities of new Plan Review process for "walk-in" types of permit applications.
- Inspected all new day care facilities.
- Hired a bi-lingual employee in the Administrative Division (to help with the Hispanic initiative).
- Assisted with enforcement provisions of Resource Protection Ordinance.
- Plumbing Division worked with the Public Health to identify sewer availability where failed septic systems were involved.
- Provided "after-hours"/emergency inspections routinely and during such events as the ice storm of December 2002.
- Plan Review Division devised a coordinated effort with the Health Department concerning additions and renovations with septic systems and wells.
- Coordinated with the Chamber of Commerce to encourage new companies to locate within the County.
- Participated in training efforts for staff on the new International Building, Plumbing, and Mechanical Codes.

## 2003-04 OBJECTIVES

- Assist in the reduction of the incidence of crime through participation in the "Eyes and Ears" program.
- Assist with the enforcement provisions of the Resource Protection Ordinance.
- Assist with implementation of software application for the development-related one-stop shopping.
- Continued participation in major training efforts to train staff on the recently adopted International Building, Plumbing, and Mechanical Codes.
- Developing an e-mail address database for developers, design professionals, and contractors that desire to be notified by e-mail about upcoming policy changes or proposed fee changes.

## FY2003-2004 Highlights/Significant Changes

- City/County Inspections is expected to be self-supporting in the upcoming fiscal year. Over the years the County's budgeted share of this agency has continually decreased, resulting in an increase of the percentage of cost recovery. The FY2002-2003 cost recovery for the County is approximately 94%. Early in the fiscal year 2004 staff will bring forward a revision to the Interlocal Agreement, recommending that the City bear the expenses and maintain all the revenues associated with the Inspections function. Therefore no revenues or expenses will be anticipated for the County next fiscal year.